

**WIN A DATE WITH  
DAVID AXEL KURTZ!**



**DETAILS INSIDE!**

The Omen

# Table of Contents

This issue contains the announcement of a contest, another entry in David Axel Kurtz's "How to Hack Hampshire College" series, a missive from Re-Rad, a letter from our not-particularly-esteemed colleague at the Climax, and some cartoons by Hannah Allen. There are not many pages in this issue, so instead of numbers, I have given them names.



## To Submit:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Evan Silberman, Prescott 102E, box 1394, ejs07@hampshire.edu.

"It's like tomatoes. No one can tell if they're a vegetable or an igneous rock."

- Chris Sommer on taxonomy

Front Cover:

Evan Silberman

Back Cover:

Hannah Allen

### Layout & Editing **STAFF**

Evan Silberman *Barack Obama*

Lindsay Barbieri *Ron Paul*

David Axel Kurtz *Alan Keyes*

Sasha Allegretta *Bristol Palin*

>>omen.hampshire.edu

# Win a date with D.A.K.!

by Evan Silberman


Every now and then, the Omen finds itself with a general lack of compelling and provocative submissions, so we think to ourselves, “what sort of ridiculous ‘contest’ can we create this time in a bid to get people to write atrocious nonsense and send it to us?” Last year around this time, our solution was an erotica contest, which produced maybe one erotic story, something hilarious by David Mansfield, and an assortment of disturbingly weird lobster-related fantasies that we sincerely hope were not serious.

But today, gentle readers, I have a new task for you. The Omen’s de facto Chief Correspondent, David Axel Kurtz, finds himself headed into the winter months without a lover to hold him in a warm embrace. Out of compassion for my countryman, slash-reliable-filler-provider, I hereby announce a CONTEST, whereby perhaps the esteemed Wordsmith will acquire a tender companion. Actually, I really just want to amuse myself at his expense, but we can pretend I’m being altruistic.

Anyway, the point is, all are invited to enter the WIN A DATE WITH DAVID AXEL KURTZ CONTEST. To enter, all you have to do is submit something, be it prose, verse, comic, or otherwise, to the Omen, indicating why you are deserving of an evening of lighthearted revelry with David Axel

Kurtz. Submissions to the contest are due to the Omen no later than Saturday, November 22. All submissions will be printed in the next issue of the Omen, and the WINNER, as selected by an ad hoc PANEL OF JUDGES, including the Man Himself, will be invited to go on a DATE with David Axel Kurtz. Some expenses will be paid by the Omen.

So that’s it for the contest. In other news, allegedly FiCom has decided to **drastically cut back the amount of money disbursed for meeting food** to student groups next year. This is utterly ludicrous. Meeting food is the only thing keeping me alive this semester. If clubs become unable to provide me with Sibie’s pizza, Wings, and other deliverable comestibles four times a week, I will probably starve. I urge all of you to **EMAIL FICOM** at [ficom@hampshire.edu](mailto:ficom@hampshire.edu) and tell them what you think of this outrageous new policy.

FiCom, of course, being a body with only a few elected members and no method of oversight or replacement by the student body at large, is yet another instance of Hampshire’s governance structure being broken and stupid, but lest I turn into my esteemed predecessor Jacob Lefton, I will not harp on this further right now. To summarize, your job, dear reader, is to **COMPLAIN TO FICOM** and also **SUBMIT TO THE OMEN!** Best wishes and stay warm. 

## Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world’s only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we’ll publish it all, and we’re happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire’s longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you’re submitting right now, right?) might not be edited,

and we can’t promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish. Your submission must include your real name: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Saturday nights in the basement of Merrill on a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don’t bite. You can find the Omen on other Fridays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

*The Omen Haiku*

**Views in the Omen (5)**

**Do not necessarily (7)**

**Reflect the staff’s views (5)**

# How Many Courses Can a Student Take During Jan-Term?

by none other than the Omen's own

David Axel Kurtz

Well, that's an easy question. Of course, at Hampshire College, a student can take as many courses as they wish, at any time.

Right?

Technically this is true. But there is (big surprise) a catch.

Only a certain number of these courses can be made available on The Hub. Meaning that only some of them will appear on your 'official' transcript. Meaning that only some will count towards your Div II, your Div II, even your Div III, and often towards grad-school applications.

During a full-length academic semester, you can take up to 6 courses or course-equivalents. That is the absolute ceiling. You can only be registered for 6 "things," or "quanta," or (say it softly) "credit-hours," at a time. This includes both Spring Term and Fall Term.

But what of Jan-Term or "Interterm?" What of that three-week course period that makes the 5 Colleges so special?

Traditionally a Hampshire student only takes 1 J-Term class. As such, it's not often an issue. But sometimes they want to take more. Sometimes two are taken. What about three? What about four? What about more?

How many accredited courses can a Hampshire student get during Jan-term?

I wasn't sure. There doesn't seem to be any clear answer. Nothing in the college Constitution. Nothing in the Community Norms or in NSNS. But I have asked around, and gotten these various responses:

My Div I advisor told me that you can only take 1 course during Jan-Term.

A friend told me that he took 2 courses last Jan-Term.

My Div II advisor has told me that she doesn't know.

A friend's Div III advisor told me that you could take 2 courses, no more.

A professor friend of mine who is currently on sabbatical says that it's the same as a regular semester, up to 6.

Zena Clift, Associate Dean of Advising down at CASA, says the following:

"As long as there are no time conflicts, you can add two I believe."

and Natalie W. Owen, Division III Coordinator at Central Records, says the following:

"At the moment there is no limit [to the number of courses you can take during Jan-Term]. This issue will be looked at soon because too many students sign up for more than one and do not complete them."

Being that it's Hampshire college, it's hard to tell which one of these is true. Or at least, truest. At the moment I expect the answer is the same as the answer to most Hampshire questions: "it's whatever you can talk them into giving you."

Likely, though, the last of the above messages is the most authoritative. Reading it over, I can only conclude that the Hampshire Powers-That-Be will soon be arbitrating upon this specific issue. Pretty soon, I expect, there will be a set maximum number of courses that one can take over J-Term, and that this maximum will be put upon every Hampshire student equally.

Yet for the moment - - - subject, of course, to the approval of the professors who are teaching/supervising the course of study, the deans of their respective Schools, the people who work in Central Records, the deans of Advising, and of course, Dean Berman - - - I can only conclude that a Hampshire student can take as many courses as they want during Jan-Term. Up to 6 at least. Perhaps more.

I myself will be trying to take three.

Wish me luck! 🙏





that the professor of the course makes the designation, which must be approved by his or her dean.

Concerns about “double-dipping,” having a single class designated as fulfilling more than one area of study, came up in most groups. While some worried that this could be exploited, most felt that it was good, encouraging interdisciplinarity and flexibility.

Some groups felt that distribution should not be tied to Division I; students should be allowed an extra semester or year to complete their distribution requirements, allowing for greater flexibility.

### III. Reoccurring Topics within Discussions

This section addresses related topics that were discussed in many groups, but are not directly related to Motion 3.

Many faculty members want there to be fewer 100-level courses. The smaller schools are forced to focus on providing required seats in 100-level courses, at the expense of providing a greater number of 200 and 300-level courses.<sup>67</sup>

Over half of the groups felt that the number of required courses should be lowered to seven. Some felt that there should be an eighth requirement that incorporates independent work in some way, possibly through research projects, mentored independent studies, or other innovative learning experiences.

Some faculty members felt that Division I should be longer, allowing students more time to complete all the requirements. Others felt that it needs to stay short and focused.

Many groups discussed melding together Learning Goals and distribution requirements in some way. More were in favor of combining the two than were not. There was no consensus among groups as to how the two might fit together.

Professors asked whether Division I should focus on the achievement of specific skills (Learning Goals) or general

breadth of study (Distribution Requirements). There was no clear consensus.

What is the goal of Division I? Must students meet a certain threshold, or is progress the aim? Meeting a threshold necessitates a “pass/fail” system and a set of standardized expectations.

The role of the portfolio was discussed in several groups, especially in relation to the Learning Goals. Some see the portfolio as a potential tool to assess Learning Goals and student progress.

Who should evaluate Division I work? Out of the faculty who discussed this question, most were in favor of making the portfolio the main means of evaluation. Possible evaluators discussed were the Division II committee, an independent group, or the advisor.

There was some talk of making the transition from Division I to Division II a more central part of a student’s academic work in their first year. This included devoting more time to writing Division II proposals.

Empowering advisors came up in several groups. However, advisor quality and training varies greatly, which is an issue that must be addressed if advisors take a greater role in Division I.

Overall, discussions repeatedly touched upon the importance of flexibility and excitement in Division I.

### III. Conclusion

The Educational Policy Committee hopes to bring a proposal for a new Division I distribution system to the December 9<sup>th</sup> Faculty Meeting. This proposal will depend upon the results of the second faculty discussion, which will occur on Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. In order to amend the current Division I system in time for changes to be implemented next year, the proposal at the December meeting must be approved. Otherwise discussions will resume in February and are less likely to influence next year’s curriculum. To learn more about the EPC: <https://hampedia.org/wiki/EPC>



<sup>6</sup> According to the Re-Rad Faculty Survey Report, faculty spend on average 9.5 hours teaching and preparing for 100-level courses every week (compared to 7 hours for 200-level courses and 2.3 hours for 300-level courses), out of an average of 48 hours spent working each week.

<sup>7</sup> Simply decreasing the number of required 100-level courses will lower the number of required seats in 100-level courses.

Dear Omen,

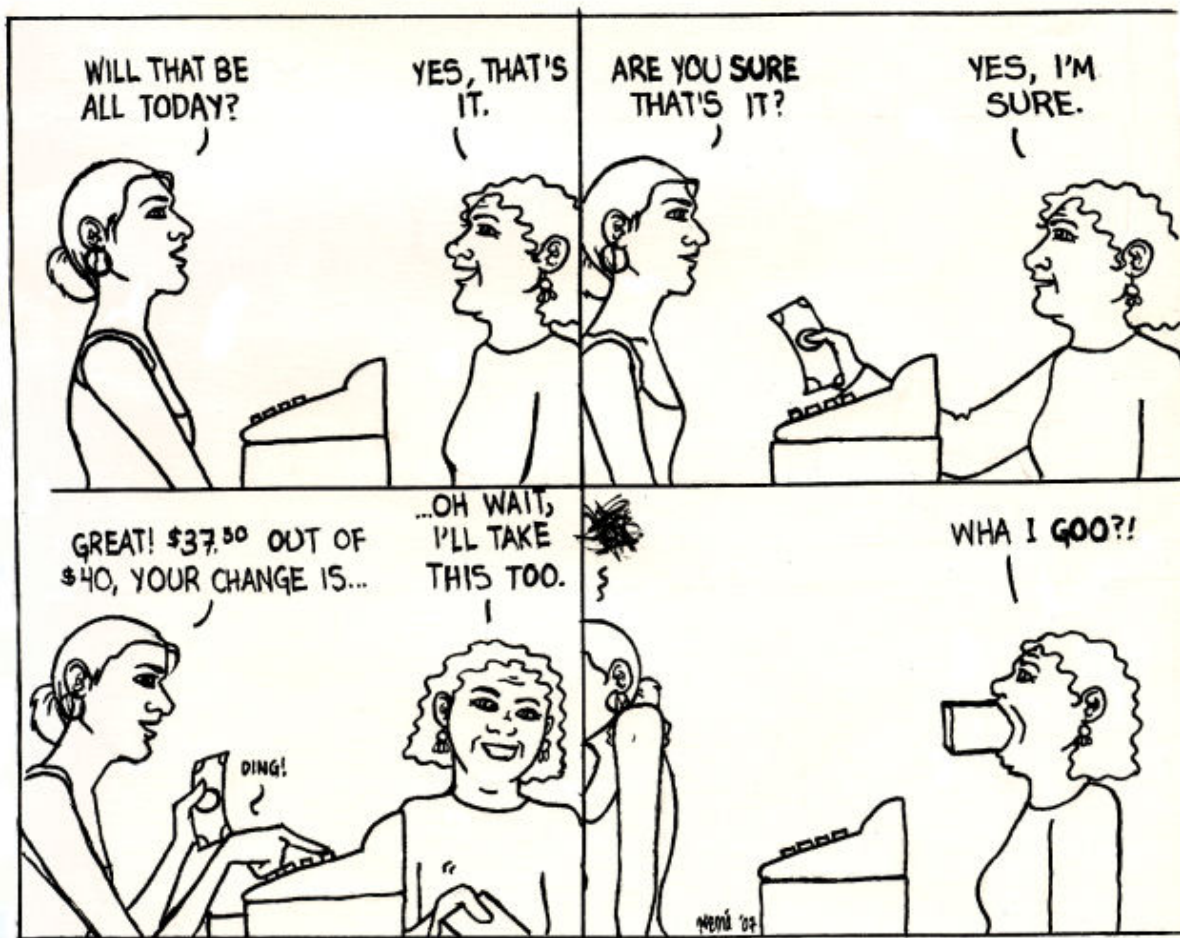
I very much appreciated your use of Helvetica on the cover of Volume 31, Issue 4. My stupid publication won't let me use it,\* and I'm, like, "in charge."

Worst Regards (in all but font usage),  
Eric Peterson  
Managing Editor, The Climax

\*we have our own font, so it's kind of a legitimate rule.



## Shopgirl by Hannah Allen



## Emo Nation by Hannah Allen

